

## Exploring the Impact of Work-Life Balance on Hospital-Based Nurses: A Comprehensive Literature Review

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### Abstract

The work-life balance of hospital-based nurses is a critical factor influencing their job satisfaction, mental health, and the quality of patient care they provide. This comprehensive literature review examines existing research on the impact of work-life balance among nurses operating in hospital settings. The review synthesizes findings from various studies to highlight the challenges nurses face in achieving a harmonious balance between their professional and personal lives. Key themes include the effects of shift work, organizational support, and the role of flexible scheduling. The analysis reveals that poor work-life balance contributes to increased stress, burnout, and turnover rates, whereas effective balance strategies enhance job satisfaction and patient outcomes. The review concludes with recommendations for healthcare institutions to implement supportive policies and practices that foster a healthier work-life equilibrium for nurses, ultimately benefiting both the workforce and the patients they serve.

**Key Words:** *Quality of Work Life, Nurses, Hospital, professional development*

### 1. Introduction :

The value of nursing care cannot be overstated in determining the quality of healthcare. Nurses play a pivotal role in patient outcomes, and their job satisfaction and work environment directly impact the care they provide.

The rapidly changing landscape of healthcare, including technological advancements, changing patient demographics, and evolving care delivery models, has indeed affected the nursing profession. These changes often lead to increased workload, higher stress levels, and challenges in maintaining a safe and supportive work environment for nurses.

Research consistently shows that the quality of the nursing work environment significantly influences patient outcomes. A positive work environment, characterized by adequate staffing levels, supportive leadership, opportunities for professional development, and a culture of safety, fosters better patient care and outcomes. Conversely, nursing shortages, high nurse-to-patient ratios, job dissatisfaction, and a lack of resources can compromise patient safety and quality of care.

Certainly, the value of nursing care is indeed a significant factor in determining healthcare quality. The quality of nursing and healthcare is closely linked to the job satisfaction rates among nurses

and the overall quality of their work life. As the healthcare landscape rapidly evolves, it directly impacts the nursing work environment, workload, and the overall quality of their working life.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that the work environment profoundly influences patient outcomes and the daily experiences within nursing care. Evidence suggests that nursing shortages, low quality of work life for nurses, job dissatisfaction, and poor patient outcomes are directly associated with the absence of a safe work atmosphere.

Addressing these challenges requires attention to creating supportive work environments, adequate staffing levels, opportunities for professional development, and fostering a culture of safety and support for nurses. Investing in strategies to improve job satisfaction and enhance the quality of work life for nurses is essential for ensuring high-quality healthcare delivery and positive patient outcomes.

The concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) has indeed gained significant attention in recent years, although its roots trace back to the 1930s. It focuses on ensuring the overall well-being of employees within an organization, rather than solely addressing work-related issues. QWL emphasizes creating mechanisms through which both employees and stakeholders collaborate to enhance both the workforce's quality of life and organizational effectiveness.

Despite its importance, there's still no universally agreed-upon definition of QWL. However, Moorhead and Griffin have described QWL as the ability of employees to fulfill their essential personal needs through their experiences within the organization. Improving QWL entails a comprehensive approach aimed at enhancing employees' quality of life in the workplace. It is crucial for attracting and retaining talent within any organization.

In essence, QWL initiatives are essential for fostering a supportive and conducive work environment that promotes employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being. By addressing factors such as work-life balance, job security, career development opportunities, and employee relations, organizations can improve QWL and ultimately drive better organizational outcomes.

Quality of Work Life (QWL) has indeed been extensively researched across various fields, including sociology, psychology, education, management, healthcare, and nursing. In recent decades, QWL has garnered increasing attention within healthcare settings.

Healthcare agencies play a crucial role as major service providers in communities, and nurses constitute the largest workforce within these organizations. Enhancing the quality of service provided by nurses has been a longstanding priority for healthcare organizations, dating back to the 1970s. However, within the broader context of striving for excellence in healthcare, the focus on QWL, emphasizing staff growth and well-being, has emerged as critical for the success of healthcare organizations.

In healthcare, QWL is often characterized by strengths and weaknesses within the overall work environment. Factors such as staffing levels, workload, leadership support, opportunities for professional development, work-life balance, and organizational culture all contribute to the QWL

experienced by healthcare professionals, particularly nurses. Recognizing and addressing both the strengths and weaknesses in the work environment are essential for enhancing QWL in healthcare settings. By fostering a supportive and conducive work environment that prioritizes the well-being and professional growth of staff, healthcare organizations can ultimately improve patient outcomes and organizational effectiveness.

The value of Quality of Work Life (QWL) is significant across various sectors, including healthcare organizations. QWL has a profound impact on the efficiency and engagement of workers. Maintaining a high QWL is essential for recruiting new employees and retaining a skilled workforce, which is particularly crucial in addressing recruitment and retention challenges faced by health departments.

Focusing on enhancing QWL can lead to numerous benefits for employees, companies, and customers alike. Improving the morale and satisfaction of workers contributes to organizational engagement, enhances the quality of treatment provided, and increases the efficiency of both individuals and organizations.

As Sirgy and his colleagues suggest, happy employees are more likely to be efficient, dedicated, and committed to their work. Conversely, neglecting to address factors that influence QWL can have significant negative effects on employee behavior, such as job satisfaction, work efficiency, and retention rates, as well as impacting organizational outcomes.

Recent studies has demonstrated the effect of career advancement incentives, such as the promotion method, access to graduation programs and continuing education, on nurses' quality of life.

The challenges regarding career and professional growth resources for nurses, their limited involvement in significant healthcare decisions and innovations, as well as disparities in remuneration and status between government and private sector services, are indeed concerning. Nurses play a crucial role in healthcare delivery, and their contributions are invaluable. It's essential to address these issues to ensure that nurses have the support, resources, and recognition they deserve.

Expanding career and professional growth resources for nurses can include initiatives such as mentorship programs, continuing education opportunities, leadership development courses, and pathways for specialization or advanced practice roles. Empowering nurses to participate in decision-making processes and fostering a culture of innovation can enhance both the quality of care and job satisfaction among nurses.

Addressing disparities in remuneration between government and private sectors may require policy interventions to ensure equitable compensation for nurses across different settings. Additionally, efforts to improve the visibility and status of nurses within the healthcare system are crucial. Recognizing their expertise, advocating for their contributions, and promoting public awareness of the vital role nurses play in patient care can help elevate their status and strengthen their position within the healthcare workforce.

Hence the researcher desires to study Quality of Work life of Nurses who are working in hospitals and their impact on Professional Development.

## **2. Objective of the study:**

The aim of this paper is to explore the impact of work life balance for hospital-based nurses in order to understand how they balanced the relation between personal life and professional life.

## **3. Research Process:**

In order to understand how hospital nurses balanced the relation between personal life and professional life, the researcher gathered information from secondary data. Number of research papers and articles related to Nurses and hospitals and their work life balance were referred. Collecting & studying the Research thesis, Scholarly articles & Research papers from various universities, Journals among all over India & Other Countries were also the source of information.

## **4. Need for Research:**

Nurses are the backbone of every medical facility or patient treatment in the health sector. Yet in India, this important group of employees is highly exploited, with a lack of respect and integrity at the workplace and, more importantly, with extremely low wages and a lack of job security.

Most nurses, mostly from poor backgrounds, have to pay lakhs of rupees to get a nursing degree and hence have to take big loans, leaving them indebted. Yet what really threatens them after graduation is a lack of resources in government-run hospitals. In spite of the shortage of nurses and other staff in government-run hospitals, the government is actively pursuing a completely non-scientific recruitment process, which prevents the majority of applicants from obtaining a position in government services while, at the same time, hiring contract-work nurses at extremely low salaries to fill some of the vacancies.

The nursing shortage is a multifaceted issue with various underlying causes. Factors contributing to this shortage include an aging population requiring more healthcare services, increased demand for healthcare due to chronic diseases and advancements in medical technology, limited capacity in nursing education programs, and challenges in retaining nurses due to factors such as high stress levels, burnout, and inadequate work conditions. Addressing the nursing shortage requires a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders, including healthcare organizations, educational institutions, government agencies, and professional associations. Strategies to mitigate the shortage may include increasing funding and resources for nursing education programs, expanding opportunities for career advancement and specialization, improving working conditions and support systems for nurses, and implementing policies to attract and retain nurses in the workforce. Additionally, efforts to enhance the visibility and recognition of the nursing profession, promote diversity and inclusion within the nursing workforce, and address systemic issues such as gender disparities and inequities in pay and career advancement opportunities are essential.

## **5. Literature review:**

Considering the importance of the study, the researcher desired to conduct a review of literature available on this study.

**A job satisfaction scale for nurses.** (Sik Hung Ng, china): In this paper, the case was posed by the researcher to establish a level of job satisfaction in nursing based on the unique job content and work background of New Zealand nurses and, after review and observations, the researcher

concluded that turnover was significantly related to overall job satisfaction, especially career prospects and the relationship with supervisors.

**Exploring the relationship between obstetrical nurse's work and pregnancy outcomes** – (Jo Watson, Monica Nicholas, Kellydobbin). The researchers investigate nurses who work while pregnant. It was the first to begin investigating pregnancy outcomes for obstetric nurses and equate full-time employment with part-time work for 95 nurses. One third of nurses reported pregnancy complications and most nurses encountered work-related and personal stress. Experts also recommended that workers cultivate a safe and secure workplace. Safe workplaces, including meeting the special needs of nurses who work while pregnant. Because if it is not then it specifically impacted adverse pregnancy outcomes, including preterm labor because birth weight.

**The experience of work engagement, hardy personality, optimism and subjective well being among nurses from china and Spain.** (Eva Garrosa, Felix, Bernarda) The researchers observed that nurses are commonly found among professionals who show a higher degree of frustration and a significant percentage of them with having to leave the profession in the next 5 years. Therefore, from across-cultural perspective, the present study showed the key influence of HP, motivation and SWB, suggesting that nurses from China and Spain are more committed to these personal tools. Further these result contributed to development of nurses in HP, optimism, SWB, promote in increase in engagement and the improvement of working environment, relationship with users and co-workers, mutual help etc.

**Demands, resources and the three dimensions of flow at work. A study among professional nurses.** (Lara Colombo, Margherita Zito): Researchers investigated how personal and employment tools, along with job demands, impact the three dimensions of workflow: absorption, work enjoyment, and work motivation. Their findings revealed that resources positively influenced all dimensions of workflow, particularly enhancing work satisfaction. Conversely, job demands had a mixed impact: they positively affected absorption but negatively influenced work enjoyment and work motivation. Based on these findings, the researchers proposed that HR managers should focus on facilitating workflow by ensuring the availability of resources and carefully monitoring job requirements.

**Factors related to affective occupational commitment among Japanese nurses. (Miho Satoh):** Researchers have demonstrated that professional autonomy and job satisfaction can enhance affective occupational commitment. Additionally, further studies suggest that implementing an intervention program focused on enhancing specific personal resources, such as ability, experience, and resilience, can further improve affective occupational commitment. This implies that fostering a work environment where employees have more control over their tasks and feel satisfied with their jobs, along with targeted personal development programs, can significantly boost their emotional attachment and commitment to their occupation.

**Work life balance: Reality check for the working women of Bangladesh. (Mayesha Tasmin, Muhammed Jakir):** The goal of the researchers behind this paper is to identify the factors contributing to work-life imbalance among women working in various sectors in Bangladesh. The study's findings indicate that female workers face significant challenges primarily due to long

working hours, job rigidity, excessive job demands, child care obligations, sexism and prejudice in the workplace, and a lack of support from supervisors.

**The relationship between time pressure and burnout syndrome: A cross sectional survey among Jordanian nurses. (Mohammad W.Darawad, Hani Nawafleh):** In this research paper, researchers investigated the levels of time pressure and burnout among Jordanian nurses, finding both to be consistently high. Emotional fatigue emerged as the most significant component of burnout and was strongly associated with the demographic characteristics of the sample. Based on these findings, the researchers proposed that healthcare managers need to modify the nursing work environment to make it less stressful and more appealing. This approach aims to address and mitigate the root causes of nurse burnout, ultimately enhancing their well-being and job satisfaction.

**Perception of patients and other health care professionals about nurses at the university college hospitals, Ibadan, Oye state, Nigeria. (Modupe O. Oyetunde<sup>1</sup>, Ononaiwu M. Kelechi, Mary O. Oyediran):** Within this article, researchers analyzed the attitude and actions of nurses serving at university colleges. Out of 200 respondents, 165 are patients and 35 are doctors from other health professionals. Thus, the result in this article showed that the nurses valued the patients higher than the doctors did. Also researchers proposed that nurses should change how they relate to other health care providers in order to achieve patient care results.

**Fear of HIV susceptibility influencing burden of care among nurses in south east Nigeria. (Ekaete Francis, Prisca Adejumo, Josephine Etowa, Adebayo Adejumo):** This study examines the degree of fear of susceptibility and the level of caregiver burden among Nigerian nurses. The findings indicate significant levels of both fear and burden. Consequently, researchers proposed that increasing the number of working nurses could reduce individual workload and minimize the burden. Additionally, the researchers suggested several other solutions, including the implementation of a holistic approach to fear reduction. They recommend that educational tools and platforms be used to encourage nurses to come together and share their feelings and experiences.

**Effect of work environment on level of work stress and burnout among nurses in a teaching hospitals in Nigeria. (Guobadia Poulina Ojekou, Odetola Titilayo Dorothy, Nigeria).**

In this study, researchers found that the stress level among staff nurses who served for only 2 to 3 years was higher. There is also a significant relationship between the work atmosphere, stress and burnout among nurses in the selected unit, and with this study, researchers proposed that hospital management should provide a work environment that is conducive to work, providing the requisite support and sufficient break times to ensure the well-being of staff.

**Selected organizational factors affecting performance of professional nurses in North West bank government hospitals. (Mrs. Ahida Saleem Thulth, Dr. Sumaya Sayej):** The researchers attempted to determine selected organizational factors (workload, available resources and management support) influencing the performance of nurses. The results of this study have shown that improving the performance of nurses, such as supervisors, would ensure an appropriate number of staff and qualifications on a work-related basis and a sufficient number

of qualified nurses in hospitals at all times and shifts.

**Predictors of “quality of work” and “poor health” among primary health care personnel in Catalonia.** (Simon L. Dolan, Salvador Garcia, Carmen Cabezas, Shay S. Tzafrir).: The objective of is to empirically test a theoretically guided model that examines the relationship between job demands, employee motivation and resources, and supervisory support, and how these factors influence the quality of working lives and general health of employees. The findings suggest that implementing practical measures to reduce workplace tension and adverse health outcomes can significantly enhance the overall quality of working life for employees in this field.

**Relationship among stress, positive affectivity and work engagement:** (Jazreel Hui et al):

The goal of this study was to identify sources of work stressors among registered nurses and to explore the inter-relationship between stress, positive affectivity, and work engagement. Researchers have found that the primary job stressors faced by most nurses include workload, time pressure, insufficient compensation, inadequate patient contact, and unmanageable emotional demands. Consequently, the researchers proposed that workplace strategies should be implemented to help nurses manage stress, such as organizing seminars and providing job opportunities within health care facilities.

**Occupational stress among emergency nurses :** (Nuttapol Yuwanich<sup>1</sup>, Sharareh Akhavan, Walaiporn Nantsupawat, Lene Martin): The research was to investigate the experiences of nurses with occupational stress in emergency departments in private hospitals in Bangkok , Thailand. The researchers found that patients and their families faced primary stressors in private hospitals, as well as disproportionate workloads, other stressors were misunderstandings and disputes between emergency department nurses and other professionals. Finally, the researchers concluded that creating a healthier working atmosphere and a harmony between patients and nurses would minimize the workload and tension that ultimately ensures the health of the patient.

**15. A comparative study on “work life balance among nurses” with special reference to government and private hospitals.** (S.Parmeshwari Shobana, S. Kannan.):

This research paper analyzes the results and concludes that both government and private hospitals in the Tirunelveli district will resolve work-life balance problems and help nurses to manage their job and family life. Temporary shortage of personnel is the key explanation for extra work, loss of leisure time and financial problems, both of which need to be discussed appropriately to researchers.

**Barriers to work life balance for hospitals nurses.** (Kathleen Mullen).: In this article, the researcher summarized as enhancing the work-life balance requires active and evidence-based approaches for self-reflection and change through practice. Also the researcher believed that awareness would help them as they became productive and efficient at work.

**Examining the effects of fatigue on decision making in nursing: a policy-capturing approach.** (Laura McClelland).: In this research review, the investigator examined the relationship between exhaustion due to shift work and decision-making among nurses. The study also aimed to determine the policies nurses use when making important patient decisions and how these policies change from the beginning to the end of a shift due to increasing exhaustion. The analysis revealed

that participants became significantly more tired, depressed, and less alert from the start to the end of their 12-hour shifts. Consequently, researchers recommended scheduling breaks and providing time off between shifts based on nurses' work hours and work areas to ensure both patient safety and nurse well-being.

**Job stress, job performance and social support among hospital nurses. (Raeda Fawzi AbuAlRub):** The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of work-related stress on job performance and the influence of social support among hospital nurses. The findings highlight the essential role of social support from co-workers in mitigating stress. The study suggests that social support positively affects work performance, which can enhance the quality of patient care. Additionally, the research indicates that a work environment characterized by social support and lower stress levels leads to higher retention rates among nurses.

**The relationship between job stress and nurses performance in the Jordanian Hospitals: A case study in king Abdullah the founder hospital. (Akif Lutfi Al-khasawneh, Sahar Moh'd Futa)** The purpose of this article is to evaluate the relationship between five stressors—family factors, economic factors, work difficulties, peer competition, and organizational environment—and the performance of nurses, specifically in terms of creativity and innovation, problem-solving, and decision-making capabilities. The results of the study revealed that family factors had no association with the performance of nurses, while the other four stressors showed a positive relationship with performance. Among these, the organizational environment had the most significant effect on performance, followed by work difficulties and peer rivalry. Based on these findings, the researchers proposed a fundamental change in the organizational environment and an increase in leader support to enhance nurse performance.

**Changes in decision making during a 12hour day shift. (Fred S. Switzer, June J Pilcher):** The purpose of this research was to establish if a decision-making transition occurred over a 12-hour day shift for registered nurses. The study found that nurses dramatically changed their decision-making practices from the start to the end of the shift, becoming less alert and more anxious as the shift progressed. It was observed that medical judgment in nurses shifts from the beginning to the end of a 12-hour shift, and that extended shift work negatively affects decision-making outcomes.

**A study on work life balance of female nurseswith reference to multispecialty hospitals, Mysore city. (Viveka Marie):** The goal of this research paper is to highlight issuesrelated to the work-life balance of nurses, as well as to support the physical and mental health, job satisfaction and work-life balance of nurses, because according to the researcher 's findings, incorrect work patterns and long working hours appear to have an adverse impact on the wealth and health of employees.

**The longer the shifts for hospital nurses, the higher the levels of burnout and patient dissatisfaction. (Amy Witkoski stimpfel, Douglas M Sloane):** In this article researcher investigated the relationship between nurses shift length and patient's assessment of care, researchers found that the longer the shift, the greater the likelihood of adverse nurse outcomes such as burnout. So accordingly, observed that patients are less satisfied when working hours of nurses are more than 13 hours and were more satisfied when nurses working 11 or fewer hours.



**Work life balance of nurses and lady doctors. (Dr. Bindiya Goyal):** According to the researchers, work-life balance is increasingly important as it significantly affects the productivity of nurses and physicians. The goal of this study is to identify factors that support sustaining work-life balance. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that the implementation of work-life balance policies and practices by hospitals would enable nurses and doctors to make better use of their capacities, thereby enhancing their productivity and overall job satisfaction.

**Quality of work life among female nurses in the kottakkal region, Kerala. (Hania Hanif, S. Manimaran):** According to the researchers, work-life balance is evolving as a critical factor affecting the effectiveness of nurses and female doctors. The aim of this study is to identify factors that help sustain work-life balance. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that the implementation of work-life balance policies and practices by hospitals would enable nurses and doctors to better utilize their potential, thereby enhancing their effectiveness and overall job satisfaction.

#### Observation of the study:

1. The available literature of this study can be a significant step towards improving the quality of the working life of nurses.
2. This study indicates that there are no reasons for concern regarding the quality of working life of nurses.
3. This research assists healthcare practitioners in developing strategies to enhance the working environment of nurses and improve their work and life. By implementing these strategies, nurses can provide better care for their patients.
4. The purpose of this research is to enhance both home and work environments by improving the performance of individuals and organizations, as well as by engaging nurses.
5. Based on the ideas presented in this paper, the findings will contribute to promoting the nursing profession.

Table No.1 Identified variables from literature

Variables found from the literature review	
• Adequate and Fair compensation	• Workplace infrastructure
• Safe and healthy Working conditions	• Politics at workplace
• Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capability	• Stress at workplace
• Opportunity for continued carrier growth and security	• Sexual at harassment workplace
• Social integration at work place	• Gender bias atworkplace
• Constitution at work place	• Work in isolation

## Conclusion

This study has delved into work life balance experienced by nurses within a hospital setting. Furthermore, the researcher has identified gaps in the work life balance within hospitals, aiming to cultivate a peaceful and healthy work environment. The literature review on the effects of work-life balance on hospital-based nurses highlights the critical importance of achieving a harmonious balance between professional responsibilities and personal life. The works suggests that a well-maintained work-life balance positively influences nurses' job satisfaction, mental health, and overall well-being, which, in turn, leads to improved patient care and reduced turnover rates. The poor work-life balance is associated with increased stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction, negatively impacting both nurses and the healthcare system. Given that the paper relies solely on the review of literature and secondary data, its practical application lies in formulating instruments, such as questionnaires, for further data collection. The literature review has identified several variables pertinent to the work life balance of nurses. Future research should focus on identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions that further support work-life balance among hospital-based nurses, ultimately enhancing both their professional and personal lives.

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